

**CITY OF BURIEN, WASHINGTON**  
**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Title:** Communications Officer  
**FLSA Status:** Exempt  
**Salary Grade:** 650

**Dept.:** City Manager  
**Reports to:** Economic Development Manager

The City of Burien believes that each employee makes a significant contribution to our success. This job description is designed to outline primary duties, qualifications and job scope. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.

**General Position Summary**

The Public Affairs Officer is responsible for developing, implementing and managing the City's communications strategic plan, including public information, public relations, media relations, internal and external communications, marketing, education, and outreach. This classification exercises considerable discretion and skill in making decisions on operational issues, managing the development and implementation of assigned City programs, anticipating and resolving crises, and otherwise ensuring the City's public information and public relations programs are implemented in a manner consistent with City goals and policies.

**Essential Functions**

- Supports and models the identified vision, values and behaviors of the organization.
- Establish and maintain effective relations with the public, the media, community leaders, local school districts, civic organizations, special interest groups, businesses, community groups and other governmental agencies, including local, county and state representatives as directed;
- Design, market and enhance the City's public image and visibility in the region; encourage citizen participation in the City's programs, service delivery and decision-making processes;
- Develop and implement a comprehensive city-wide communications strategic plan;
- Present an effective "voice" for the City by overseeing oral, written, televised, and web-based media communications;
- Write, edit, design, research, and produce public and media information materials using a variety of formats including print, electronic, audio, and video.
- Facilitate the dissemination of information to promote City-wide issues and/or events; lead interdepartmental communications relating to City publications and communication opportunities;
- Monitor and update social media content.
- Serve as advisor to City management and department staff for events and media relations for high profile issues and events;
- Anticipate media responses, make presentations to media and/or prepare spokespersons for media on breaking stories, news features and publicity campaigns;
- Accurately assess the intent of the City Manager's Office and City departments, translate such intent into an effective presentation plan, and implement the plan while ensuring effective impact of the information released;
- Produce and deliver oral and written media/news releases, fact sheets, background reports, audio/visual programs, web pages, community newsletters, publications, educational/promotional materials;
- Respond promptly to urgent media requests.
- Respond in a timely and effective manner to the activities, scheduling and communication needs and oral inquiries from the public;

- Plan and implement a community outreach program, work with community groups; identify groups/organizations affected by specific City actions, and assist in ensuring that those groups are informed of opportunities for public input;
- Research and develop/recommend new emerging communication methods, technologies and enhancements to better achieve City communication goals.
- Coordinate and lead a team from different departments to identify the City's electronic media needs and uses.
- Act as project lead and point of contact for assigned projects.
- Participate as a member of the Leadership Team.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

### **Secondary Functions**

- Provide support for the City of Burien's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during emergency activation and coordinate communications with field staff, the EOC, and other local agencies.
- Serve on and participate in various employee committees.
- Manage contracts.

### **Job Scope**

Position involves frequent new and varied work situations involving a high degree of complexity. Incumbent determines own practices and procedures and contributes to the development of new concepts.

### **Interpersonal Contacts**

The Communication Officer works with contacts both inside and outside of the organization. Contacts frequently will contain confidential/sensitive information necessitating discretion at all times.

### **Specific Job Skills**

#### **Knowledge of:**

- Principles and practices of advanced strategic planning, project planning, public communication plan development and the production of support materials;
- Principles and practices of public relations, media relations, public speaking, community relations, economic development, marketing and advertising; research methods, techniques and public involvement strategies; methods to develop strategic communications in a rapidly changing environment, implement creative marketing plans and develop multi-media presentations.
- Communication techniques including verbal, written, web, media and other technology, along with how to strategically apply them in a municipal environment;
- Knowledge of current social media tools.

#### **Ability to:**

- Establish and maintain cooperative and effective working relationships with public officials, City staff, community groups, regional organizations, and the general public.
- Thoroughly understand the City's political environment and sensitivities, and to function effectively within that environment.
- Effectively represent the City in situations which are potentially adversarial or stressful.
- Use sound judgment for situations that require quick action; prioritize and manage multiple concurrent tasks simultaneously; respond quickly and appropriately to inquiries from citizens, the media, and other external customers;
- Effectively use interpersonal skills in a tactful, patient and courteous manner;

- Communicate effectively to and with non-English speaking communities;
- Develop and deliver information via public speaking before small and large audiences; write speeches and coach other speaker on presentation skills;
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills, initiative, discretion, and maintain confidentiality;
- Work effectively work in a team environment, be willing to take on tough issues, work for consensus and resolve conflicts;
- Research, analyze and compose reports, research papers and documents that clearly communicate the subject matter; read, interpret, apply and explain codes, rules, regulations, policies and procedures;
- Work effectively with politically sensitive situations, analyze complex problems, develop creative solutions, apply analytical skills to obtain desired results; and
- Attend meetings and events within the community that occur in the evenings and weekends; occasional statewide travel to meetings.

### **Mental Activities**

Position requires continuous use of discretion, interpersonal skills, independent judgment and/or action, and the ability to read, write, understand, and speak English; frequent decision making, teamwork, and creativity; occasional customer service, problem analysis, presentations/teaching, and the ability to perform basic math; and rare negotiation, mentoring, and the ability to perform advance math.

### **Physical Activities**

Position requires continuous hearing; frequent sitting, repetitive motions of hands and wrists, fingering, and talking; occasional standing and walking; and rare repetitive motions of feet, bending, reaching, handling, stooping, and feeling. Incumbent must be able to push and pull two pounds; lift five pounds, and carry ten pounds.

### **Education and/or Experience**

Bachelor's degree in communications, journalism, public relations, marketing, economic development, business or public administration plus a minimum of five years work experience in strategic communications, public/community relations, journalism, economic development, marketing, or related field involving the preparation and distribution of public information materials for a public entity or large organization OR a combination of education, training and practical experience which provides an equivalent background required to perform the work of the position.

### **Special Requirements**

- Valid Washington State Driver's License with satisfactory driving record.
- Successful completion of pre-employment background check.
- Municipal experience preferred.

### **Job Conditions**

Work is performed in an office environment and out in the field at off-site meetings and events; may be exposed to individuals who are irate or hostile; may be subject to long hours, nights and weekends, due to the attendance of City Council meetings and other responsibilities required at this management level. The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to sit, talk and hear; frequently required to walk and use hands to finger, feel or handle writing utensils and office supplies; occasionally required to stand and reach with hands and arms; and occasionally required to lift and/or move up to 25 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close, distance, color, and peripheral vision; depth perception; and the ability to focus.

This work is characterized by management, administrative and highly skilled public relations, media relations, marketing and communications to include public speaking to a variety of audiences. The incumbent will lead City communication efforts, provide advice and counsel to elected officials/staff, respond to questions/concerns from the community and the media, and frequently assist with high profile or politically sensitive situations.

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